

ORIGINAL

MM 94-360

ROBERT A. BRADY  
1ST DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEES:  
NATIONAL SECURITY  
SMALL BUSINESS

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-3801

September 26, 2000

Chairman William Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Kennard:

As a public servant, I am concerned about the amount of gratuitous sex and violence on television, the number of commercial messages during the children's programming, and the lack of programming that addresses the needs of all members of our community, particularly the disabled.

The move toward digital broadcasting provides the FCC with a unique opportunity to review the standards under which digital broadcasters operate. The simple question arises: what responsibilities will be placed upon digital broadcasters to address these concerns?

Attached is a list of proposed recommendations for digital broadcasters.

Please begin a proceeding immediately to consider the public interest responsibilities that television broadcasters should embrace in exchange for the free use of the digital airwaves.

Sincerely,

*Robert A. Brady*

Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress

- ☐ 216 CANNON BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2801  
(202) 225-4731  
FAX: (202) 225-0088
- ☐ 1510 W. CECIL B. MOORE AVENUE  
SUITE 304  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19121  
(215) 226-5430
- ☐ THE COLONY BUILDING  
511-13 WELSH STREET  
1ST FLOOR  
CHESTER, PA 19013  
(610) 874-7094
- ☐ 1907 SOUTH BROAD STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19146  
(215) 389-4627  
FAX: (215) 389-4636

SEP 27 2000

MMB  
Public  
PV  
WEEK  
10/2/00

No. of Copies rec'd 4  
List ABCDE

## **Proposed Standards for Digital Broadcasters**

**1. Educational Programs and Services.** Digital television's ability to provide rich pictures and many layers of information suggests a unique opportunity for educational programs. Every television station which uses the public airwaves should be required to set aside a minimum of 7 hours each week to provide quality educational programs or significant educational services (such as data transmission for schools) to students of all ages.

**2. Limits on Commercials During Children's Programs.** Children should not be bombarded with commercial advertisements or with advertising disguised as entertainment or educational programs. We recommend that digital broadcasters be limited to no more than four commercials, no more than sixty seconds long, per hour during children's programs.

**3. Public Affairs and Political Programming.** Too many vital issues and perspectives of importance to the nation and the local community remain unexpressed and unexamined. Digital broadcasters should be required to use the new power of digital transmission to expand the viewpoints expressed over the public airwaves. We recommend one hour of public affairs programming every day per channel with at least an equal emphasis on local issues and needs, including free and fair political discussion. Such programming should air in the most popular time periods. News shows should not satisfy this requirement.

**4. An Independent Content-Based Ratings System.** While we oppose government censorship, we do think parents should get the information they need to make decisions about programs their children watch. We recommend that digital broadcasters be required to provide an easy to understand independent ratings system about the violent and sexual content of programs. Through the increased information capability of digital technology the present ratings system can be substantially improved upon.

**5. Public Service Announcements.** Digital broadcasters should provide one public service announcement for every four commercials, with at least equal emphasis placed on independent and locally produced PSAs addressing a community's local needs. PSAs should run in all day spots including in primetime and at other times of peak viewing. PSAs should not be a substitute for in-depth public affairs programming.

**6. Support for Public Service Media.** In return for their use of the public spectrum broadcasters should be required to make a contribution of a small percent of their gross revenue to pay into state and national trusts to support non-commercial local and national public service media. In addition, broadcasters should be required to set aside a small percent of their gross revenue to create public interest programming.

**7. Channel Space for Public Service Media.** Digital broadcasters who multiplex should be required to set aside channel space for non-commercial media. We also support those

recommendations which call for a reservation of noncommercial channel space dedicated to public service, once broadcasters are required to return spectrum now used for analog broadcasting.

**8. Community Outreach.** Digital stations should be required to reach out to ordinary citizens and local leaders to determine community needs and interests. This process of reaching out and involving the community should serve as the station's guide to addressing these needs through news, public affairs, children's and other local programming, and public service announcements. Public input should be invited on a regular basis through postal and electronic mail services as well as broadcast announcements. The call for requests for public input should be accessible to the disabled. The stations should report quarterly during the year to the public on their findings.

**9. Accountability.** Digital broadcasters should disclose their public interest programming and activities on a quarterly basis, matched against the ascertained community needs and interests. This should be done using standardized, easy to complete forms sensitive to administrative burdens and easily understood by the public.

**10. Reporting on Diversity Efforts.** Whether it is in programming, political discourse, hiring, promotion, or business opportunities within the industry, digital broadcasters must make an effort to reflect the nation's diversity. We recommend that broadcasters seize the opportunities inherent in digital television technology to support these goals and to report quarterly to the public on their efforts. Serving diverse interests within a community is both good business and good public policy.

**11. Closed Captioning and Descriptive Services.** A digital broadcast station should provide closed captioning and descriptive services for the blind of PSAs, public affairs programming, and political programming. Captioning and descriptions in these areas should be phased in over the first 4 years of a station's digital broadcasts, but should be completed no later than 2006.

**12. Privacy protection.** Digital television, particularly when combined with telephone and cable technologies, creates many opportunities for broadcasters to learn about consumer choice and preference, and to cater to those preferences through targeted programming and commercials. Consumers should have the power to prevent the collection and sale of information about their personal program or product choices.

**13. Rate protection.** Digital television will provide broadcasters the ability to generate scrambled A pay-per-view@ programs, in much the same way that cable can do today. Consumers should be protected from excessive rates. The Federal Communications Commission should have the power to regulate the rates charged by broadcasters for pay-per-view programs.